

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING CONFERENCE

General Information

Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
Funding Instrument Type:	CA
Funding Opportunity Number:	<i>USEPA-ORD-TBN25891</i>
Posted Date:	<i>September 29, 2005</i>
Original Due Date for Applications:	<i>November 17, 2005</i>
Current Due Date for Applications:	<i>(Same as Above)</i>
Archive Date:	
Category of Funding Activity:	Environment
Expected Number of Awards:	1 possible award
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$300,000
Award Ceiling:	\$60,000 per year for five years
Award Floor:	\$60,000 first year
CFDA Number:	66.510 ORD Surveys, Studies, Investigations and Special Purpose Grants
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement:	None

Eligible Applicants

Assistance awards under CFDA 66.510 are available to States, territories and possessions, and Tribal nations of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private State universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, State and local government departments, other public or private nonprofit institutions, and in some cases, individuals who have demonstrated unusually high scientific ability. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive grants and cooperative agreements from the EPA for this activity.

Federal Agency Name

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development
Attn: Lara P. Autry
US Environmental Protection Agency
109 T. W. Alexander Drive (E243-05)
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Summary Description

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is offering financial assistance to a technically qualified, eligible organization (i.e., nonprofit and universities) interested in sponsoring the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC). The National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) encompasses all environmental media (e.g., water, air, solid waste, pesticides) and all of the Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA's) monitoring programs with the exception of criteria pollutants in air (e.g., hazardous waste, wastewater, drinking water, source emissions, Superfund, pesticides). Initially known as the Waste Testing and Quality Assurance Symposium (WTQA) before

the name was changed to NEMC, for 21 years, the conference's growth and diversity have made this the premier conference for the entire environmental community. With a combination of technical presentations in both oral and poster formats; a plenary session featuring leaders in government and industry discussing issues of concern to the community and future regulatory and program directions that will impact the community; a table top exposition featuring new instruments, services, and supplies of interest to the environmental community; and short courses to help meet the continuing training needs of the monitoring community, the symposium serves as a means of fostering a partnership among the regulated community, the laboratory and consulting communities, and state and federal regulators. EPA has historically provided not-for-profit scientific organizations with limited financial support to make the conference possible and is willing to continue to provide such support. This is the only conference, designed to facilitate an exchange among leaders in government, academia, and the private sector on current events, policy, new monitoring technologies, and future directions across all environmental programs, that EPA anticipates co-sponsoring during the period of this agreement.

NEMC serves as a forum for members of the environmental community to raise the awareness of the greater community to problems and issues that they have uncovered and work with their partners across the community to solve them. It also serves as the principal forum for the community to work together to improve the quality of environmental information, facilitate the development and use of new monitoring technologies, and make compliance monitoring more cost-effective. To support these objectives, EPA is offering financial support to a technically qualified organization for a 5 year period. The awardee will be expected to be responsible for:

- conference design and management (e.g., planning committee for sessions, exhibitor area, training sessions);
- marketing and outreach;
- location/hotel contract negotiations; and
- logistics (e.g., conference materials pre-conference, for conference, and post-conference proceedings).

In addition to providing limited financial support, Agency staff will work closely with the sponsoring organization primarily in the areas of program content and the scheduling of the various technical and policy sessions.

Agency Contact Person for Electronic Access Problem

John Nanartowicz III, Phone: 202-564-4756 Email: nanartowicz.john@epa.gov

Link to Full Announcement (*Note: GAD will complete.*)

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Title of Assistance Opportunity:

Support for the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC)

Background:

The National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) encompasses all environmental media (e.g., water, air, solid waste, pesticides) and all of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) monitoring programs with the exception of criteria pollutants in air (e.g., hazardous waste, wastewater, drinking water, source emissions, Superfund, pesticides). Initially known as the Waste Testing and Quality Assurance Symposium (WTQA) before the name was changed to NEMC, for 21 years, the conference's growth and diversity have made this the premier conference for the entire environmental community. With a combination of technical presentations in both oral and poster formats; a plenary session featuring leaders in government and industry discussing issues of concern to the community and future regulatory and program directions that will impact the community; a table top exposition featuring new instruments, services, and supplies of interest to the environmental community; and short courses to help meet the continuing training needs of the monitoring community, the symposium serves as a means of fostering a partnership among the regulated community, the laboratory and consulting communities, and state and federal regulators. EPA has historically provided not-for-profit scientific organizations with limited financial support to make the conference possible and is willing to continue to provide such support. This is the only conference, designed to facilitate an exchange among leaders in government, academia, and the private sector on current events, policy, new monitoring technologies, and future directions across all environmental programs, that EPA anticipates co-sponsoring during the period of this agreement.

NEMC serves as a forum for members of the environmental community to raise the awareness of the greater community to problems and issues that they have uncovered and work with their partners across the community to solve them. It also serves as the principal forum for the community to work together to improve the quality of environmental information, facilitate the development and use of new monitoring technologies, and make compliance monitoring more cost-effective.

Funding Priorities/Focus:

EPA expects to award financial assistance under this solicitation to support the efforts of an eligible organization to sponsor this national conference. The awardee is expected to be responsible for:

- conference design and management (e.g., planning committee for sessions, exhibitor area, training sessions);
- marketing and outreach;
- location/hotel contract negotiations; and
- logistics (e.g., conference materials pre-conference, for conference, and post-conference proceedings).

EPA is soliciting initial proposals from technically qualified, interested, and eligible organizations that are interested in sponsoring the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC), which serves as a forum to highlight and address environmental monitoring problems or issues that have been uncovered by community members. The NEMC also serves as the principal forum for the community to: work together to improve the quality of environmental information; facilitate the development and use of new monitoring technologies; and make compliance monitoring more cost effective. This exchange of information creates a foundation for facilitating leading-edge, sound scientific research to support the protection of human health.

In addition to providing limited financial support, Agency staff expect to work closely with the sponsoring organization primarily in the areas of program content and the scheduling of the various technical and policy sessions.

Environmental Results - This RFIP seeks proposals that will advance the following Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) goals and objectives as identified in the EPA Strategic Plan (<http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/2003sp.pdf>)

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|-----------------|-------|--|
| GPRA Goal: | 1.0 | Clean Air and Global Climate Change |
| Objective: | 1.6 | Enhance Science and Research |
| Sub-objectives: | 1.6.1 | Provide Science to Support Air Programs |
| | 1.6.2 | Conduct Air Pollution Research |
| | | |
| GPRA Goal: | 2.0 | Clean and Safe Water |
| Objective: | 2.3 | Enhance Science and Research |
| Sub-objectives: | 2.3.1 | Apply the Best Available Science |
| | 2.3.2 | Conduct Leading-Edge Research |
| | | |
| GPRA Goal: | 3.0 | Land Preservation and Restoration |
| Objective: | 3.3 | Enhance Science and Research |
| Sub-objectives: | 3.3.1 | Provide Science to Preserve and Remediate Land |
| | 3.3.2 | Conduct Research to Support Land Activities |
| | | |
| GRPA Goal: | 4.0 | Healthy Communities and Ecosystems |
| Objective: | 4.4 | Enhance Science and Research |
| Sub-objectives: | 4.4.1 | Apply the Best Available Science |
| | 4.4.2 | Conduct Relevant Research |

Environmental Output: The National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) serves as a forum to highlight and address environmental monitoring problems or issues that have been uncovered by community members. The NEMC also serves as the principal forum for the community to: work together to improve the quality of environmental information; facilitate the development and use of new monitoring technologies; and make compliance monitoring more cost effective.

Environmental Outcome: This exchange of information creates a foundation for facilitating leading-edge, sound scientific research to support the protection of human health.

Statutory Authority for Award of Assistance:

This research is authorized under §8001 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), §104 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), §1442 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), §10 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), or §103 of the Clean Air Act (CAA).

II. Award Information

Amount and Range of Individual Award: \$60,000.00 per year for a total of five years (Grand Total - \$300,000.00).

Number of Awards: 1 award (Estimated Award Date of January 2006)

Funding: The EPA is expected to fund this award over a period of 5 years. Funding of the first year of the award is expected to be at \$60,000 total. Additional funding of \$60,000 each year that follows up till the fifth year will be contingent upon availability of funds and satisfactory progress by the selected recipient.

Project Period: January 2006 to December 2010

Supplemental Applications: Applications for supplemental awards of existing EPA assistance agreements will not be eligible to compete for this assistance opportunity.

Type of Award: The Agency anticipates the award of a cooperative agreement.

Anticipated Federal Involvement:

EPA and the Project Officer for this assistance agreement anticipate substantial involvement in the implementation of the program as follows:

1. Provide technical input on NEMC plenary and technical sessions;
2. Provide involvement as a co-sponsor of the NEMC meeting in making logistical decisions; and
3. Provide involvement as a co-sponsor in facilitating the plenary session.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants: Assistance awards under CFDA 66.510 are available to: States, territories and possessions, and Tribal nations of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private State universities and colleges, not-for-profit hospitals and laboratories, State and local government departments, other public or private nonprofit institutions, and in some cases, individuals who have demonstrated unusually high scientific ability. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive grants and cooperative agreements from the EPA for this activity.

Eligible nonprofit organizations include any organizations that meet the definition of nonprofit in OMB Circular A-122. However, nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. Universities and educational institutions must be subject to OMB Circular A-21.

Cost Sharing Requirements: None.

Other Eligibility Criteria:

Administrative Eligibility and Review: All proposals will be subject to an administrative review to ensure that they conform with the requirements of this RFA, including, but not limited to, those set forth in Section IV. EPA will reject any applications that fail to conform with the administrative requirements of this RFA, including but not limited to those set forth in Section IV.

Relevance Review: Initial proposals that are found administratively acceptable will be subjected to a review for relevancy to EPA's mission to support advancement of environmental science. Initial proposals may be rejected if they are found to lack relevance. Examples include:

1. Proposal is deficient technically with no chance for consideration.
2. Proposal fails to advance the objectives stated in the solicitation even if successfully performed.
3. Proposal fails to demonstrate a public purpose of support and stimulation; i.e., it implies the primary purpose is to provide direct support to the Federal government.

Sub-agreement Eligibility Criteria:

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application for this assistance agreement. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the assistance agreement, and

which eligible organizations(s) will be sub-awardees of the recipient. Sub awards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 40 CFR 30.2(ff). The recipient must administer the assistance agreement, is accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 40 CFR 30.2(gg), sub recipients are accountable to the recipient for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For profit organizations are not eligible for sub awards. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 40 CFR Part 30. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in the proposal. Moreover, the fact a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the proposal EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements or consultant compensation limitations.

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility during the Administrative Review (see Section V). Initial proposals from ineligible applicants will be returned without further review.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Address to Request Application Package: Lara P. Autry, US Environmental Protection Agency, 109 T. W. Alexander Drive (E243-05), Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. Application information is also available from the EPA/ORD/NERL website at <http://www.epa.gov/nerl/> under the heading Assistance Opportunities. This document, and any subsequent amendments, constitutes the entire Request for Initial Proposal.

Content and Form of Application Submission: At a minimum, the initial proposal shall consist of the following items:

1. A cover sheet that identifies the RFIP title and identification number, name and address of applicant, point of contact, telephone number, e-mail address for the applicant, applicant's DUNS number (see Section VIII), and the date of the submission.
2. Technical proposal that discusses the approach to accomplishing the goals stated under Funding Priorities/Focus, the capabilities (in terms of personnel and facilities) of the applicant to complete the program, the expected results from this program, how the program will advance and stimulate the public need, and how the results will be made available to the public and government. In developing the technical proposal, the applicant should focus on the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V and structure the proposal to address each of the criteria in the order listed.

The page limitation of the technical proposal is 15 double sided pages with a minimum font size of 12, single-spaced. This page limitation should include all text, tables, figures, references, attachments, and appendices. In addition, a 2-page summary of the primary lead and any other key personnel identified in the proposal should also be provided.

3. A budget estimate for the project that is broken down into direct labor, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, other direct costs and overhead with summaries for each year and the total for the entire project. Indicate proposed cost sharing, as well.

Initial proposals should be submitted in the original with 3 copies and should be double-sided.

Submission Date, Time, and Location: Because of security concerns, applications cannot be personally delivered. They must be sent through regular mail, express mail, or a major courier.

The following address must be used for regular mail, express mail, and couriers:
Lara P. Autry
US Environmental Protection Agency
109 T. W. Alexander Drive (E243-05)
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

To be considered timely, initial proposals must be received by 3:00 p.m. local time on the solicitation closing date from the U.S. Postal Service or a major courier. Proposals should be sent to the attention of Lara P. Autry. Initial proposals received after the deadline will not be considered and will be returned to the submitter.

Intergovernmental Review: This assistance opportunity is subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants should contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out how to comply with the State's process. The names and addresses of the SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

Funding Restrictions: The EPA is expected to fund this award over a period of 5 years. Funding of the first year of the award is expected to be at \$60,000 total. Additional funding of \$60,000 each year that follows thru the fifth year will be contingent upon availability of funds and satisfactory progress by the selected recipient.

Amendments: Amendments will be posted on this website and the due date for initial proposals will be extended if deemed appropriate.

Other Submission Requirements: None.

V. Application Review Information

Administrative Review: All initial proposals will be subject to an administrative review to ensure that they conform with the requirements of this RFIP. EPA may reject any applications that fail to conform substantially with the requirements of this RFIP Relevance Review: Initial proposals that are found administratively acceptable will be subjected to a review for relevancy to EPA's mission to support advancement of environmental science. Initial proposals may be rejected if they are found to lack relevance. Examples include:

1. Proposal is deficient technically with no chance for consideration.
2. Proposal fails to advance the objectives stated in the solicitation even if successfully performed.
3. Proposal fails to demonstrate a public purpose of support and stimulation; i.e., it implies the primary purpose is to provide direct support to the Federal government.

Technical Review: Initial proposals that are found administratively acceptable and relevant shall be reviewed for technical merit against the following criteria.

1. Adequacy of technical approach to prepare for operation and sustainability in running the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC). (20%)
2. Strength of the qualifications and experience of the organization and key personnel for program operations. (20%)
3. Past performance, which touches on the following: (i) past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project; (ii) history of meeting reporting requirements on prior or current assistance agreements with federal and/or non-federal organizations and submitting acceptable final technical reports; and (iii) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project. (20%)
4. Plan for co-sponsorship of the program, given the understanding that EPA's assistance will not likely cover the full expenses of the conference. (NOTE: Although EPA is not requiring a mandatory cost share, your approach to obtaining additional funding to co-sponsor this conference will be a factor in ranking applications. Applicants are encouraged to provide specific information regarding resources (cash/in-kind services) that they, or a project partner, would commit. EPA will consider the nature and firmness of these commitments as part of this ranking factor.) (20%)
5. Cost effectiveness of the proposed budget. (20%)

Other Factors: None

Review and Selection Process:

Evaluation Process: The administrative and relevancy reviews will be conducted by EPA personnel who are not a part of the technical review panel. The technical review panel might include EPA personnel and/or non-EPA consultants, either Federal employees or otherwise, who are able to demonstrate technical expertise and a lack of any conflict of interest.

Source Selection: EPA will make a selection of the applicant for award based upon the rankings of the technical review panel and the other factors discussed above. The Decision Official is an Office of Research and Development (ORD) manager who will determine which applicant should receive the award.

Full Application: The applicant selected for award will be requested to submit a full, detailed application in accordance with the guidance provided by EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment (<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/>). After receipt of the full application, EPA may negotiate changes to the proposal with the selected applicant. For example, EPA will discuss significant comments received from the technical reviewers, aspects of the budget that may be questionable, the proposed terms and conditions for the agreement, and the nature and extent of EPA collaboration.

Rejection Factors: Applications may be rejected because they fail to comply with the administrative requirements of the RFIP, they are found to lack relevancy, they are judged technically unacceptable, or they are not deemed suitable for award due to other factors (if identified). EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no awards.

Disputes: Disputes will be resolved pursuant to the process described in 40 CFR 30.63 and Part 31, subpart F.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates: The anticipated award date is January 2006.

VI. Award Administration Information

Award Notices: Notice of award will be made in writing by an official in the EPA Grants Administration Division. Preliminary selection by the Decision Official in the Office of Research and Development does not guarantee an award will be made. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of EPA should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with an EPA Program Official. The primary lead or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the EPA Grants Award Official does so at their own risk.

EPA will promptly notify in writing via email those applicants whose initial proposal is rejected. An unsuccessful applicant may request a debriefing to better understand the evaluated strengths and weaknesses of its proposal and the reason for rejection if other than technical merit.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Regulations and OMB Coverage:

Grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations are subject to 40 CFR Parts 30 and 40 and OMB Circular A-122 for non-profits and A-21 for institutions of higher learning.

Grants and agreements with state, local, and tribal governments are subject to 40 CFR Parts 31 and 40 and OMB Circular A-87.

Programmatic Terms and Conditions: Terms and conditions will be negotiated with the selected recipient covering the following requirements:

The nature and extent of collaboration between EPA and the recipient.

Reporting:

Quarterly Progress Reports: The selected recipient will be required to submit quarterly progress reports to the EPA Project Officer on the 10th calendar day of the month proceeding the end of the quarter. The quarter will be calculated based on the award date of the assistance agreement. Thereafter, a report will be due on each successive date for the life of the project. The quarterly progress reports will include brief statements covering work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, actions taken, and planned activities for the next quarter. Each report shall include a summary of expenditures and any changes of key personnel concerned with the project, as well.

Draft Final Report: The recipient agrees to submit a draft final report to the EPA Project Officer for comment at least 90 days prior to the end of the approved project period. The recipient shall prepare the final project report in accordance with the EPA Project Officer's instructions and submit the final project report within 90 days after the end of the project period.

Final Report: The selected recipient will be required to submit a final report within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance.

Final Report Format: Final reports and summary submissions will be in both hard copy form and in electronic format. The CD supplied by the recipient should be produced with an Agency standard software package and the file must be in ASCII

(American Standard Code for Information Interchange). All reports delivered to EPA must be Year 2000 compliant (see EPAAR 1552.211-79).

The recipient agrees to submit the final report to the EPA Project Officer in accordance with 40 CFR 40.160-5 and the “Handbook for Preparing Office of Research and Development Reports”, 8/95, as revised and updated at the time of report preparation. The draft report is due ninety days prior to the end of the project period, and the final report is due ninety days after the end of the project period. A final technical report is required in accordance with 40 CFR 40.160-5.

VII. Agency Contact

The primary agency contact for this RFIP is Lara P. Autry at:

US Environmental Protection Agency
109 T. W. Alexander Drive (E243-05)
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Telephone: 919-541-5544
E-mail: autry.lara@epa.gov

If unable to reach Ms. Autry, contact Mr. Nanartowicz at:

Telephone: 202-564-4756
Telefax: 202-565-2903
E-mail: nanartowicz.john@epa.gov

VIII. Other Information

Questions: Questions concerning the content of this RFIP should be submitted in writing (e-mail) no later than 15 days after the solicitation Posting Date. Do not attempt to seek information regarding this RFIP from any source other than those identified in Section VII as the information provided may be erroneous. Questions that are considered significant will be answered via an amendment to this RFIP.

Confidential Information: Clearly mark information considered to be confidential. EPA will make final confidentially decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR, Part 2, Subpart B. As noted above, initial proposals might be provided to one or more non-EPA consultants for review. All reviewers will be required to sign confidentiality agreements certifying that they will keep all deliberations confidential, and they will not copy any portions of any material provided by EPA for review, and they will return all material to EPA upon request. If you are unwilling to allow non-EPA consultants to review your proposal, please advise us of your decision in a cover letter to your proposal.

DUNS Number: Grant applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. OMB has determined that there is a need for improved statistical reporting of Federal grants and cooperative agreements. Use of the DUNS number government-wide will provide a means to identify entities receiving those awards and their business relationships. The identifier will be used for tracking purposes, and to validate address and point of contact information.

A DUNS number will be required whether an applicant is submitting a paper application or using the government-wide electronic portal (Grants.gov). The DUNS number will supplement other identifiers required by statute or regulation, such as tax identification numbers. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711. Individuals who would personally receive a grant or cooperative agreement award from the Federal government apart from any business or non-profit organization they may operate are exempt from this requirement. The website where an organization can obtain a DUNS number is: <http://www.dnb.com>. This takes 30 business days and there is no cost unless the organization requests expedited (1-day) processing, which includes a fee of \$40.